(a) whether the Government are contemplating of reducing the sahre of priority sector lending by commercial banks; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) and (b). The Committee on The Financial System (Narasimham Committee) has suggested in their report, submitted to the Government in 1991, that the existing directed credit programmes should be gradually phased out. At present, the Priority Sector consists of banks advances to agriculture, small scale industries, small road and water transport operators, retail trade, small business, professional and self employment, State sponsored organisations of SC/ST for purchase and supply of inputs, education, consumption loans and housing loans. In terms of recommendations of Narasimham Committee the re-defined Priority Sector shall have small and marginal farmers, tiny sector of industry, small business and transport operators, village and cottage industries, rural artisans and other weaker sections. At present Reserve Bank of India has fixed a target of 40% of lending by banks to the Priority Sector. The Narasimham Committee has recommended that for the re-defined Priority Sector the target should be 10% of the aggregate bank credit and a review may be undertaken after three years to see if the directed limit needs to be continued. the Government is yet to take a final view on the recommendations of the Narasimham Committee.

Modernisation of Ports

2864. SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD:
SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry has urged the Government to immediately undertake an extensive modernisation programme of ports for creating adequate capacity to cope with the requirements of shippers;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard;

(c) whether due to inadequate modernisation and development of port facilities, the ports remained ill equipped to serve the needs of shippers and exporters; and

(d) if so, the steps the Government propose to take to modernise and develop various ports in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) No proposal has been received in this Ministry.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). Modernisation is a continuous process. The capacity of the ports which was 20 million tonnes in 1951 has increased to 168 million tonnes in 1991–92. The requirements of Indian Shippers and Exporters have been met.

In the 8th Plan, the Government proposes to further improve the functioning of the ports by concentrating on:

1. Development of infrastructure in ports in consonance with the overall economic growth;

2. Increasing level of containerisation in the country;

3. Deepening of ports for handling the bigger sized ships in ore handling ports;

4. Mechanisation of loading/unloading facilities; and

5. Improving productivity in labour and equipments.

Setting up of Public Interest Litigation Cell in High Courts

2865. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the All India Chief Justices Conference has recommended for the setting up of a Public Interest Litigation Cell in each High Court;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations made thereon;

(c) the names of High Courts which have implemented the recommendations;

(d) the categories of persons or bodies who can submit their petitions for seeking judicial relief; and

(e) whether the Supreme Court have also issued any guidelines to the Government in this regard and if so, the details thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) and (b): Yes, Sir. The All India Chief Justices' Conference, 1991 has recommended the setting up of a Public Interest Litigation Cell in each High Court to enable the poor, oppressed and economically or physically handicapped to seek judicial relief.

(c) As per the information received from the Supreme Court, the recommendations have so far been implemented by the High Courts of Andhra Pradesh, Bombay, Delhi, Guwahati, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim.

(d) and (e). As per the information received from the Supreme Court of India, the All India Chief Justices' Conference referred to in the Question also resolved that the guidelines dated 1.12.1988 followed by the Supreme Court for entertaining letters/petitions received as public interest litigation may be followed by the High Courts subject to modifications having regard to local conditions. These guidelines enumerate a wide variety of categories of matters/persons in respect of which/whom letters/petitions will ordinarily be entertained such as bonded labour, neglected children, non-payment of minimum wages, petitions from jails complaining harassment, complaints of death in police custody, petitions against atrocities on women, etc. as well as matters of public importance but excluding individual/personal matters.

Export Price of Cotton

2866. SHRI GANGADHARA SANIPALLI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether export price of cotton is less than domestic price;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for exporting cotton at lower price than the domestic price?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) The export price of Bengal Deshi cotton which has only been allowed